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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 12 November 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. VOYAME

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 4) (continued)

Supplementary report of Egypt (CAT/C/17/Add.11)

1. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Zahran, Mr. Khalil, Mr. Fahmy, Ms. Shanin, Mr. Bebars, Mr. Hammad and Mr. Sirry (Egypt) took seats at the Committee table.

2. Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt), introducing the supplementary report, said that Egypt had been one of the first signatories of the Convention against Torture and it had ratified the Convention without reservations. Upon ratification, the Convention had become part of Egyptian law and could be invoked in the courts.

3. As an expression of its commitment to the objectives of the Convention, Egypt had consistently cooperated with the Committee and looked forward to a continued dialogue on ways and means of ensuring the implementation of the Convention's provisions. For Egypt, the crime of torture could not be justified or accepted under any circumstances. Torture was also contrary to religious precepts and beliefs.

4. Egypt had recently been the target of a wave of indiscriminate destruction carried out by a small, but active minority of extremist terrorists. In 1992 alone, nearly 500 casualties had been counted among security forces, foreign tourists and Egyptian civilians, in addition to the destruction of public and private property. His delegation would elaborate on those events later in the course of the discussion.

5. Torture had been punishable under Egyptian penal legislation since the end of the nineteenth century. Later amendments had increased the penalties imposed for that crime.

6. Egypt had adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1966, and it had incorporated in its Constitution of 1971 the rights and freedoms contained in the Covenant and in other relevant instruments.

7. Following the promulgation of the Constitution, a number of laws had been adopted amending applicable legislation, in particular Act No. 37 of 1972, which had stiffened the penalties set out in the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure and also introduced new punishments. A paragraph had been added to article 40 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulating that any person arrested or detained must be treated in a manner conducive to the preservation of his human dignity and must not be harmed physically or mentally. A new paragraph had been inserted in article 15 of the Code stating that criminal actions in respect of an offence of torture or of other violations of human rights and freedoms were not subject to any statute of limitations. A further paragraph had been added to article 302 of the Code stipulating that any statement by the accused or witnesses which was proved to have been made under coercion or threat was considered null and void.

8. As the above examples showed, Egypt had not acceded to the Convention against Torture merely to bring its legislation into conformity with that instrument; on the contrary, Egypt's Constitution and legislation contained provisions of wider application than the Convention, as provided for in article 1, paragraph 2, of the Convention. Egyptian legislation also went beyond the definition of torture contained in article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention in that it did not require that suffering should be severe.

9. By making civil and criminal responsibility for acts of torture imprescriptible, Egypt demonstrated its determination to prosecute those who committed torture, regardless of the time that had elapsed since the crime had been perpetrated.

10. The report contained an account of criminal investigation procedures in Egypt and the guarantees linked to each stage thereof. It described in detail the legislative provisions on states of emergency and the accompanying safeguards, as well as provisions and guarantees concerning prisons. It then set forth the provisions and safeguards relating to the independence of the judiciary and the supremacy of the rule of law. Matters relating to the judiciary were governed by the Higher Council of the Judiciary, which was presided over by the president of the Court of Cassation and included other members of the judiciary.

11. The members of the Department of Public Prosecutions, which had competence to investigate and accuse, enjoyed judicial immunity in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary.

12. The annex to the report contained a table comparing the articles of the Convention against Torture with the provisions of the Egyptian Constitution and legislation. The table indicated a number of judicial applications of the Supreme Constitutional Court, whose judgements were binding on Government authorities. Sentences handed down by the Court of Cassation were also cited.

13. In response to the Committee's request for clarification on certain parts of the initial report (CAT/C/5/Add.5) and expanding upon replies given in 1990, he explained a number of technical aspects concerning the way torture was dealt with in Egyptian legislation and jurisprudence. Once Egypt had acceded to the Convention against Torture, the text of the instrument had been published in the Official Gazette and its provisions had become applicable on the same footing as domestic law. The Convention's definition of torture had been incorporated into Egyptian legislation. He noted that article 126 of the Penal Code did not set any degree of suffering before an act could be found to be torture and did not specify that the suffering could only be physical. The Court of Cassation had ruled that torture did not necessarily have to leave traces on the victim's body. Under Egyptian legislation, torture could be physical, emotional or mental.

14. Forms of torture recognized by judgements of Egyptian courts included binding the hands or feet of the victim in order to beat him and inflicting or threatening to inflict torture on the victim's wife or relatives. Humiliation by forcing the victim to take a woman's name or wear women's clothes was prohibited. Incitement to, collusion in and aiding and abetting torture were

also punishable (arts. 39 to 47 of the Penal Code) and accomplices were punished with the same severity as the principal authors of the crime (art. 41 of the Penal Code). Anyone who was aware of an act of torture having been committed and remained silent or did not try to prevent such an act from taking place was punished in the same way as the person who committed the act of torture. Public officials accused of torturing or of having taken part in torture who claimed that they had simply been following the orders of a superior were not relieved of their responsibility. Nor was ignorance of the illegality of torture admitted as a defence.

15. With regard to the acceptability of evidence of torture, the accused could be convicted only if it had been proved beyond a doubt that the illegal act had been committed by him. When doubts persisted, the accused enjoyed a presumption of innocence.

16. Under article 302 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, judges were totally independent and free in their judgements with the proviso that they were required to exclude evidence which had not been brought during the hearing and to disregard any statement by an accused or a witness proved to have been made under duress. The Court of Cassation had also ruled that proof of torture did not have to be explicit or obvious; it was sufficient if proof could be logically inferred on the basis of available evidence and reasonable assumptions. Courts were empowered to give rulings on cases which had not been resolved by experts' reports.

17. In considering allegations of torture, courts could draw on the expertise of an independent Forensic Medicine Department, whose highly qualified medical specialists were held legally responsible for their testimony or for withholding evidence of torture (arts. 294, 296 and 298 of the Penal Code). In 1992 the Department had received an award from the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.

18. Citing articles 126, 129 and 282 of the Penal Code, he emphasized that, in addition to torture committed in order to extract a confession, any unlawful arrest or detention accompanied by physical or mental abuse was a criminal act. The definition of what constituted torture was sufficiently broad to allow judges to form a judgement in the light of individual circumstances and any act by an official which violated the honour of an accused person or caused suffering could constitute grounds for prosecution. The provisions of the Penal Code, including those applicable to cases of torture, could not be suspended even during a state of emergency; the State of Emergency Act could not make lawful an act which had been unlawful before the declaration of the state of emergency. Furthermore, the extenuating circumstances provided for in articles 60 to 63 of the Penal Code, such as ignorance of the law and legitimate self-defence, could not be invoked in cases of torture, and there was no time-limit within which victims of torture were required to institute proceedings in order to obtain redress. The Court of Cassation had also ruled recently that the Head of State could be cited in any legal proceedings for compensation arising from acts of torture, in conformity with the Constitution and the Convention against Torture.

19. A number of allegations of torture brought against his Government had been declared by examining magistrates to be inadmissible or unfounded. Information on judgements in cases of alleged torture in 1992 and 1993 was contained in a list of tables and statistics which his delegation was making available to the members of the Committee.

20. As a developing country with limited resources, Egypt faced considerable difficulties in implementing its ambitious development plans and those problems naturally also had repercussions in the field of human rights. Egypt was nevertheless, trying to cooperate fully with the United Nations and its agencies to improve the functioning of Government bodies and to promote awareness of human rights and democratic values.

21. In the field of education and training, the principles of human rights were now being taught in police academies, law schools and specialist centres for judges, prosecutors and the police. As part of an overall national modernization programme and based on UNESCO initiatives, efforts were being made to include issues of international understanding, human rights, democracy and equality in school curricula. As to information, publishing and the media, the Government of Egypt was committed to safeguarding its own declared democratic values by ensuring that the media remained free and independent and by promoting citizens' awareness of their basic rights and liberties. That commitment was also evident in the freedom granted to national and international non-governmental organizations to carry out their activities. The Government of Egypt cooperated constructively with such organizations and used their reports to obtain valuable information and as a basis for formulating appropriate measures.

22. In the area of the administration of justice, a special unit had been set up within the Department of Public Prosecutions to investigate allegations of torture and prosecute those responsible. Several members of the Department worked in the unit, thereby making available their competence and experience in criminal investigation and prosecution. Information centres had been set up to assist the unit and its agents underwent special training in the principles of human rights and the relevant international conventions at the National Centre of Legal Studies. In the police force, police officers had been sent by the Ministry of the Interior on human rights training missions to Sweden, Italy and the United States of America and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights was assisting with the organization of training programmes. Under agreements between the Egyptian Government, the United Nations crime prevention programme and the European Crime Prevention Institute, efforts were under way to modernize Egyptian penal institutions. At the recent meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Warsaw, Egypt had asked to be involved in cooperation in all areas relating to human rights.

23. Overall, the report demonstrated the respect for human rights of all legislative and executive bodies in Egypt and the commitment of the Government to safeguarding those rights, which was the prerequisite for establishing a just world order. It also reflected the Government's resolve despite difficult circumstances, to combat extremism and violence in all its forms, without compromising its respect for democracy and the rule of law.

24. Mr. DIPANDA MOUELLE (Country Rapporteur), having summarized the Committee's consideration of the initial report of Egypt (CAT/C/5/Add.5), said that all the questions put by members of the Committee to the Egyptian delegation (CAT/C/SR.14 and 15) had now been answered either orally or in the supplementary report (CAT/C/17/Add.11), which should, however, have been submitted in 1992. He expressed his appreciation for that report and for the oral introduction by the Egyptian delegation, which had been so detailed that he would not have to ask many of the questions he had intended to put.

25. Although the supplementary report contained very detailed information of a legal nature, it was not in keeping with the Committee's guidelines on the form and contents of reports and did not make it clear how articles 2 to 16 of the Convention were implemented in practice.

26. The report stressed that the Convention was part of domestic law and could be invoked in the courts. However, it referred mainly to the old Constitution, which had been amended because of political developments. That point had been made by Amnesty International and by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, both of which alleged that torture continued to be practised in Egypt. In its reply on that point, the Government of Egypt had said that some cases of torture were still before the courts and had submitted a statistical document showing how those cases were dealt with.

27. He welcomed the inclusion in the annex to the report of the table comparing the articles of the Convention with the Egyptian Constitution and legislation.

28. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report mentioned various punishable offences which were apparently equated with torture, but torture did not seem to have been clearly defined. It would thus be difficult to punish all the manifestations of torture described in article 1 of the Convention. The representative of Egypt had said that the Court of Cassation had dealt with that problem by ruling that there did not have to be marks of torture on the bodies of victims for torture to be proved; it thus seemed that psychological and moral torture was recognized in Egyptian case law.

29. Paragraph 8 of the report stated that article 126 of the Penal Code stipulated that torture was punishable by an aggravated penalty, but also that unjustified or unlawful arrest accompanied by threats of murder and physical torture was punishable by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or a fine. That did not seem to square with the provisions of article 4, paragraph 2, of the Convention, which stated that: "Each State party shall make these offences punishable by appropriate penalties which take into account their grave nature".

30. In connection with paragraph 10 (a) of the report, he asked how the independence of the judiciary was ensured in practice. How were judges trained, recruited, appointed and, where necessary, removed from office? He would also like to have a brief description of the organization of the judiciary in Egypt.

31. He welcomed the statement in paragraph 10 (e) of the report that criminal or civil proceedings in connection with encroachments on the public rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution were not subject to any statute of limitations, since victims of torture were often too traumatized to lodge a complaint immediately. He asked whether, under Egyptian law, any other proceedings were not subject to a statute of limitations.

32. In connection with paragraph 10 (j), he asked whether the police obtained an order from the Department of Public Prosecutions or the judge before making an arrest.

33. Paragraph 15 (b) referred to article 20 bis of Act No. 57 of 1968, which seemed to contradict the Constitution by stipulating that a detainee held without a court order was to be treated in the same way as a person held in precautionary detention and that any other provision contrary to that was to be annulled. It was generally agreed that the Constitution took precedence over domestic law.

34. With regard to paragraph 19 (c), he said that, if it was true that no civil action could be brought when the victim was not known, that was contrary to article 14 of the Convention. However, since the Egyptian delegation had stated that the Court of Cassation had issued a ruling to the effect that the State was responsible in such cases, the problem had been solved.

35. Was the court competent to hear a civil action in connection with a complaint of torture a civil court or a criminal court?

36. Referring to paragraph 20 of the report, he asked whether the preliminary investigation undertaken by the Department of Public Prosecutions was independent and impartial and whether it offered the same safeguards as to rights of the defence as an investigation by an examining magistrate.

37. In connection with paragraph 25, he asked for confirmation that a state of emergency had been in force since the death of President Sadat in 1981. Could the state of emergency be extended indefinitely by the People's Assembly or was there a time-limit?

38. In connection with paragraph 32 (a), he asked what authority was entitled to issue warrants for arrest during a state of emergency. Paragraph 32 (f) stated that: "The Minister of the Interior has the right to appeal against a release order issued by the court. Such appeal must be heard, within 15 days of its submission, by another division whose decision is final". What was the division in question?

39. With respect to paragraph 33 (b), which stated that two officers might be appointed as additional members of higher State security courts by order of the President of the Republic, he wished to know whether those two officers were career judges, jurists or soldiers and on the basis of what criteria they were appointed.

40. Paragraph 33 (e), (f) and (g) seemed to call into question the independence of the judiciary, since decisions of the State security courts presided by a judge became final only when ratified by the President of the Republic.

41. Egyptian law not only gave the Minister of the Interior the right to renew a detention order, but the security forces could re-imprison a person after he had been freed by the court. He asked whether the Egyptian delegation could comment on what appeared to be a gross violation of the principle of respect for res judicata.

42. He wished to know what was meant by the term "natural judge" in paragraph 36 (f) of the report.

43. With regard to paragraphs 37 et seq., Mr. Sorensen would be commenting on the application of articles 10 and 11 of the Convention. As far as prisons were concerned, however, he would like to know how the prison inspection commissions operated and whether their inspections were effective and resulted in published reports.

44. He welcomed the statement in paragraph 41 that any refusal to execute judgements on the part of competent public officials constituted an offence punishable by law, but wished to know how the offence was defined and how it was punished.

45. With respect to paragraph 45 (g), he wished to know who the three most senior presidents of the courts of appeal were who sat on the special board that dealt with the disciplinary control of judges.

46. He thanked the Egyptian delegation for its cooperation and said that he sympathized with the difficulties experienced by its Government and looked forward to hearing the replies to his questions.

47. Mr. SORENSEN (Alternate Country Rapporteur) thanked the Egyptian delegation for its report and its oral introduction, which had provided answers to several of his questions.

48. At the Committee's request, the written report dealt with the Convention article by article; however, it referred only to legislation and not to implementation. The work of the Country Rapporteur and the Alternate Country Rapporteur would have been easier if the information in the very full oral introduction had been included in the written report.

49. He asked whether the statement in paragraph 3 of the report that Egypt was an unreserved signatory of most international human rights conventions and treaties could be taken as an indication that Egypt intended to make declarations under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention in future.

50. He wished to have confirmation that, in the last 34 years, there had been only an 18-month period in which a state of emergency had not been in force in Egypt. If that was so, the state of emergency laws would appear to be much more important than ordinary law.

51. Paragraphs 18 to 24 of the report described the criminal investigation system and stated that persons might be detained in recognized places, which were thus inspected. In that connection, he referred to documents submitted by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights and Amnesty International, both of which claimed that, before being formally arrested and placed in a recognized prison, detainees spent long periods in unrecognized places, incommunicado.

52. He asked what the difference was between being apprehended, detained and arrested and at what stage an arrested person was informed of his rights. Many detainees had said that they had been blindfolded, but how could that be so if they were placed only in recognized prisons?

53. The Committee had been told of the existence of military courts set up by Presidential decree in which the judges were officers and sat for two years. According to the Committee's information, there was no appeal from such courts. The sentences were examined by the Minister of Justice and sent to the President for a final decision. The Committee had been told that several civilians had been judged in such military courts and he had learned from a Danish newspaper report that a person accused only of being a member of an illegal terrorist organization had been sentenced to death and hanged.

54. He regretted that the report did not say whether or how article 1 of the Convention had been incorporated into Egyptian legislation.

55. With regard to the implementation of article 2 of the Convention, there had been universal condemnation of the rising tide of terrorist activity in Egypt, which posed a particular problem for the authorities. However, in their efforts to combat terrorism, the authorities had to resist the temptation to resort to acts of torture, which were not only contrary to article 2 of the Convention, but had also proven throughout history to be an ineffectual way of fighting crime. Torture was degrading to the victim but also to the perpetrator and ultimately undermined the structure of a democratic State. An explanation of how Egypt was implementing and respecting article 2 of the Convention would be appreciated.

56. As to the implementation of article 4 of the Convention, he requested statistical data on how many persons charged with committing acts of torture had been brought before the courts, how many cases had been found inadmissible, how many involved Government law enforcement officials, how many of them had been sentenced and for how long.

57. A particular matter of concern to the Committee was the case of a police officer who had been found guilty of beating a prisoner to death and who had been sentenced to one year in prison. How could such a lenient sentence be explained? The observations on the report of Egypt prepared by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) stated that there had been 111 cases which had been documented on the basis of court rulings and in which the use of torture against the defendants had been recorded. Those accusations had been substantiated by the Egyptian Forensic Medicine Department. The Committee would like to have information on the outcome of those cases.

58. With regard to article 10 of the Convention, he was glad to note that training courses were being organized for the police, prison officers and other Government officials and that Egypt was taking full advantage of the expertise of the Advisory Services, Technical Assistance and Information Branch of the Centre for Human Rights, as well as of that of other countries. However, it was essential that members of the medical profession and law enforcement officials should be given courses on how to recognize signs of torture. If Egypt was in need of assistance in that regard, every effort would be made to provide it.

59. It was also gratifying to note that Egypt had endeavoured fully to comply with article 15 of the Convention and that, as a result of its efforts, 27 cases had been dismissed after the courts had found that the confessions had been obtained under duress or as a result of torture. Equally welcome was the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for victims of torture. Further proof of Egypt's desire to help victims of torture would be for it to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture if it was not already doing so.

60. Mr. KHITRIN said that he welcomed the detailed report and the desire of the Government of Egypt to continue its dialogue with the Committee, as shown by the high-level delegation it had sent to the Committee's current meeting.

61. He was nevertheless concerned about the fact that the state of emergency had been almost permanently in force in Egypt for 12 years. The rise in terrorism should not be used as a pretext for disregarding the provisions of the Convention. The Committee would greatly appreciate statistical information on how many persons had been sentenced to the death penalty, how many had been executed and for what reason, the number of investigations carried out in connection with alleged cases of torture and the penalties imposed on those found guilty.

62. In 1992, Egypt had adopted Act No. 97 on terrorism. How was terrorism defined in that Act and did the definition correspond to the one contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?

63. During the oral introduction to the report, reference had been made to the independence of the judiciary. However, it seemed that the President, as Head of State, was increasingly interfering in the judicial process. He would like to have information on how many court sentences the President had approved and how many people had been pardoned.

64. Many non-governmental sources had indicated that there were cases in Egypt of torture and ill-treatment by the police and other security forces. Of particular concern were the length and conditions of detention in such cases, on which the Government of Egypt should provide information in its replies.

65. Mr. BURNS congratulated the representatives of the Government of Egypt on the report and their oral introduction.

66. He asked why so many capital cases had been referred to the military courts set up under the state of emergency. In recent years, he had been struck by the independence of civil courts in Egypt and the broad role played by the Department of Public Prosecutions. He therefore wondered whether the military courts had been set up largely because the Executive could no longer rely on the civil courts to hand down the decisions it expected. It seemed that civil courts were dismissing cases in which confessions and other evidence had been obtained through torture. He would appreciate it if the Government of Egypt could provide statistics which would either support or refute that assumption and show how many cases had been tried by military courts, how many persons had been acquitted or convicted and how many pardons had been granted by the Executive. He would also like information on whether military judges had the same security of tenure as civilian judges and whether they really were independent.

67. Amnesty International had alleged that a number of detainees had been or were being held incommunicado. It had claimed that, where a person had been arrested and charged with security offences, he could be held incommunicado for up to four months. There were also grounds for believing that, during detention, prisoners were subjected to torture. In those circumstances, what safeguards were available to detainees? Once again, statistical data relating to those allegations would be welcome. As there was no right of judicial appeal against judgements handed down by military courts and given the fact that many sentences included the death penalty, Egypt seemed to be contravening the provisions of article 16 of the Convention. Although it could be argued that the death penalty in itself was not cruel, summary trials without basic legal safeguards were.

68. The definition of torture in Egyptian legislation seemed to be narrower than that contained in article 1 of the Convention, which was not limited to the obtaining of confessions. What was Egypt prepared to do to ensure compliance with article 1 of the Convention? The Committee would welcome information on whether or not corporal punishment was applied, by whom and in what circumstances. Could it form part of a penal sentence or was it used as a disciplinary measure in prisons?

69. With regard to article 2, paragraph 3, of the Convention, there were no circumstances in which respondeat superior could be justified. He would welcome comments on article 63 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (p. 21 of the report), which was contrary to the provisions of the Convention.

70. He asked how asylum-seekers and refugees in Egypt were dealt with under domestic legislation? If no provisions were applicable to them, was there a publicly promulgated administrative regime? Could asylum-seekers, in particular appeal against decisions handed down by the courts? He requested information and statistics on the measures taken in Egypt to ensure compliance with article 3 of the Convention, including details of expulsions for reasons of State security and the legal regime under which they had been carried out.

71. Reports published by non-governmental organizations and the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions of torture (E/CN.4/1993/26) indicated that torture was routine practice in Egypt, and not merely with regard to detainees charged with State security offences. Could it be assumed that legal safeguards were not working in many respects?

72. Mr. BEN AMMAR said that he welcomed the support Egypt gave to peoples fighting for their independence. A tribute to its work was the fact that so many liberation movements had set up their headquarters in Cairo. Cairo also hosted many meetings of non-governmental organizations working to improve the human rights situation not only in Arab countries, but also in other parts of the world.

73. There were, however, some areas of concern. He would like details on the situation in Egypt with regard to pre-trial detention, the conditions in which detainees were held and the role of the Department of Public Prosecutions, as its powers at times seemed to be broader than those of the courts. He also wished to know about the situation with regard to the information services and the police, since they were apparently not always under the supervision of the Department of Pubic Prosecutions.

74. Although the Act of July 1992 on terrorism was designed to combat crime and terrorism, some of its provisions were very vague and made certain offences crimes under the Constitution. It seamed that expressing opinions, including drafting and publishing documents and tracts, could be regarded as offences. Clarifications in that regard would be welcome.

75. The Committee would also appreciate information on whether all places of detention were under the supervision of the Department of Public Prosecutions. According to the letter of the law, it seemed that they were, but other sources of information stated that detention camps existed outside Cairo and elsewhere and that they were not within the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Prosecutions.

76. Was there a possibility that the state of emergency would be lifted before May 1994?

77. In respect of article 2 of the Convention, he asked what effective, legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures would be adopted to prevent acts of torture. The establishment of a unit within the Department of Public Prosecutions was a welcome development. It was to be hoped that, as a result, solutions could be found to the problems that now existed. He also wished to know what additional new measures would be taken with regard to pre-trial detention and other matters in order to ensure that Egypt complied fully with the provisions of the Convention. The Committee would be fully prepared to assist the Government of Egypt in any way possible.

78. Welcoming the information provided on efforts to train police officers and other law enforcement officials, he said that seminars and courses should be organized specifically for police officers in Egypt and in other countries. They would serve as a forum in which discussions could be held on how interrogators could obtain confessions without having to resort to unlawful measures or torture.

79. Egypt should be congratulated on the establishment of a rehabilitation centre for victims of torture. However, it should ensure that the centre was open not only to Egyptian nationals, but also to victims of torture from other countries. Institutions to protect and promote human rights had been given the full backing of the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993. Egypt should give serious consideration to the establishment of such an institution, as it would be a perfect forum for dialogue and could also monitor detention centres and prisons.

80. The CHAIRMAN drew the attention of the representatives of the Government of Egypt to paragraph 8 of the report of the latest session of the Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/79/Add.23), which read: "... recognizing that the Government has a duty to combat terrorism, the Committee considers that the measures taken to do so should not prejudice the enjoyment of the fundamental rights enshrined in the Covenant, in particular, its articles 6, 7 and 9. The Committee is particularly disturbed by the adoption in 1992 of law No. 97 on terrorism, which contains provisions contrary to articles 6 and 15 of the Covenant". The Government of Egypt should provide details on what it was doing to remedy that situation.

81. The Convention also contained certain technical articles relating, for example, to extradition and universal jurisdiction, but Egyptian legislation was not always in conformity with those articles. Egypt should therefore take measures to ensure that it complied fully with all provisions of the Convention.

82. On the basis of the replies to all its questions, the Committee would compile its recommendations and conclusions, which would be sent to the Government of Egypt if time constraints prevented the Committee from making them available directly to its representatives.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.